

CAREER FOCUS

Monthly Informed Decision Seminar helps Airmen who face a critical decision!

BY MASTER SGT.
DAVID HALVORSON
TEAM KIRTLAND
career assistance advisor

To stay or to go? It's a question that most, if not all, Air Force members may ask themselves at some point in their military career. The decision to re-enlist or separate is a heavy one, and for those weighing their options, there's help.

To assist Airmen in deciding whether or not to stay blue, Kirtland offers the monthly Informed Decision Seminar briefing.

It's a comprehensive program designed to provide benefit and career information to first- and second-term Airmen before their date of separation so they can make an informed decision to re-enlist or separate.

Airmen are given a half-day briefing packed full of information designed to help them choose the life path, whether military or civilian, that's right for them.

Facilitated by the 377th Air Base Wing career assistance advisor, the briefing includes information on a variety of subjects including medical and dental services, educational benefits and financial planning (including a civilian/military lifestyle comparison as well as on savings and investments). Airmen also receive up to date briefings

on assignments, retraining, promotion and re-enlistments.

Several guest speakers address Airmen attending the seminar to give their perspective, including the 377th Air Base Wing commander or vice commander, and the wing's command chief master sergeant.

Since the seminars' debut (an Air Force Chief of Staff retention awareness initiative, now three years old), the majority of feedback has been positive, and there's no question the briefing is extremely helpful to Airmen—whether they decide to separate or re-enlist.

One statement from a recent feedback form read, "Even though I had my mind set on getting out, the seminar caused me to pause and rethink my decision."

By chance, that same person met up with me a few days later and informed me that after talking with his spouse that evening, they had decided to continue serving as a military family. They wanted to complete their educational goals and get better prepared financially for that "big leap" that was sure to occur upon separation.

Another bit of feedback indicated that, "while there was a lot of information I already knew about, I was surprised by some of the new programs and policies that impact myself and my Airmen. The earnings comparison (between active duty personnel and their civilian counter-



Master Sgt. David Halvorson

parts) was especially surprising—I had no idea how much I actually made compared to those on the outside!"

Although the decision to re-enlist or separate is a personal one that only the member can make, the goal of the seminar is to provide vital information they need and to make the choice that's right for them. The information gained from this seminar, combined with mentoring from commanders, first sergeants and supervisors will give Airmen and their families a multitude of resources to assist them in making the right decision—an *informed* decision.

The Informed Decision Seminar is mandatory for first- and second-term Airmen, between 12 and 18 months before their date of separation.

Always held the last Wednesday of the month, the next IDS briefing is May 26, in the 377th Air Base Wing's Presentation Center, Building 20604.

First sergeants and members receive notification when Airmen are due to attend the workshop.

For more information, call 846-6636 or e-mail david.halvorson@kirtland.af.mil.



Col. Henry L. Andrews, Jr.
377th Air Base Wing
commander

Maj. Michael Kleiman
377th Air Base Wing
Public Affairs director

Terry E. Walker
Editor

Jennifer E. West
Staff writer, 846-4235

Senior Airman Erin L. Smith
Sports, Services and Of
Note editor, 846-4236

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Military spouses' Heart Link launches with party

The Family Support Center has reenergized the Heart Link Spouses Orientation Program for spouses new to the Air Force lifestyle.

The program designed for spouses with five or less years in the Air Force community is also open to spouses of other branches of service.

Offered quarterly, the first meeting of the revamped program is June 10, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., in Room 120 in the Consolidated Support Building. The program is free and casual dress.

Program invitations with required RSVP date are available at the Family Support Center, the Chapel, Family Advocacy Program and the Mountain View Club caterer.

The orientation includes lunch, four door prizes and presentations by the Chapel, Health and Wellness Center, Child Development Center, Youth Center, Life Skills Support Center, Family Advocacy Program, TRICARE, Army and Air Force Exchange Service and the Commissary.

Participants also receive a special coin.

For information, contact Jane Gates or Teresa Reinhard, 846-0741.

FORUM

kirtlandcc.forum@kirtland.af.mil, 846-4240

Thanks to family childcare providers

Unfortunately and frequently, we forget to thank those people that truly make a difference in our family's lives. Kirtland AFB is very lucky to have a wonderful group of day care providers in the Family Child Care group. Our son has been placed in the childcare system since his birth, and we have had an awesome experience.

His current provider, Heather Moore, is not only a wonderful "mommy" to my son, but has helped him progress developmentally. This group of professional women has planned for many educational and fun activities for this special group of children that are left in their care.

My son looks forward to his time not only with his provider, but playgroups and activities with other Family Child Care kids.

I would like to thank the Family Child Care providers for all their hard work and for consistently going above and beyond "standard" day care and truly creating a wonderful childhood experience.

Thank you for taking the time to recognize the Family Child Care program and the dedicated individuals providing care to Kirtland AFB families in their licensed homes.

Heather Moore is an outstanding childcare professional who takes pride in providing a warm, nurturing environment for the children in her care. The 377th Services Squadron is proud to have Ms. Moore on their team.

The Air Force has approximately 3,600 licensed and trained Family Child Care providers available to provide care during the day, night and weekends for over 22,000 children between two weeks and 12 years of age.

Providers are required to complete an extensive training program and are constantly monitored for quality to maintain their licenses. Family Child Care homes are an excellent resource for families seeking childcare. We encourage parents to call our Family Child Care coordinator, Hallie Stokes, 846-1802, for additional information.



COL. HENRY L. ANDREWS, JR.
377th Air Base Wing commander

Beer ads—good idea?

Why is the BX Gas Station allowed to look like a beer hall, with all those flyers and stuff outside the building advertising booze? I started my career as an 18-year-old Airman, influenced by a lot of things, and I don't think that it is such a good idea to put such heavy emphasis on the price of beer at a BX facility. You've got these banners all over the base gas station—it is rather outrageous. I just think it is bad taste, and it sends the wrong message to our Airmen.

We are proud to partner with the Army and Air Force Exchange System, a responsible retailer that fully shares your concerns about alcohol-related issues in the military community and the way alcoholic beverages are promoted. They have agreed to collaborate with the beer vendors and remove any banners and signs that may appear to send the wrong message to our community.

The primary mission of the exchange service is to provide our military community with the merchandise and services that are in demand by the majority of our customers. Its secondary mission is to generate earnings in support of morale, welfare and recreation programs.

When it comes to this issue, the

exchange service will find other means to communicate to their customers that they are competitive and can participate in all promotions available to the general public.

You decide urgency

I have never been so thoroughly disgusted with the lack of service at our base clinic. I am a healthy person that seldom needs medical assistance. However, this past weekend was a wake-up call for me. My wife was having severe lower abdominal cramps and was released from a local hospital. The next day she was experiencing even worse cramping and TRICARE asked me to get a hold of the primary care manager on-call, since it was Sunday. It took me nearly 30 minutes to navigate through a quagmire of recorded options on the medical group phone system.

My wife was in excruciating pain and I had to listen to "Wednesday and Fridays the clinic is closed for PT, and on each third Thursday of the month they are closed for training, etc." Frankly, in a time of need, I did not find it appropriate to hear non-productive rhetoric on the phone when I needed medical attention!

Is the hospital supporting our base populace or just the personnel assigned to the hospital? My troops work 14-hour days and are forced to complete the majority of their physical training and appointments during their break. The reason my Airmen find Air Force life difficult is because their hospital friend's brag about working 8-hour shifts and living the life of Riley... It seems that the hospital needs to be re-blued and start supporting the base troops.

You make an important point—when the situation is urgent to you, it's urgent. Period. So, while calls on training days, weekends, holidays and during exercise times will reach the recording you mentioned, the next choice is always yours to make. If, at the time you reach this message, you feel that you have an emergency situation, please hang up and dial 911 or simply go to the nearest emergency room. Otherwise, option two takes you to the TRICARE

nurse advice line, option three allows you to speak to the on-call primary care manager, and option four is for dental emergencies.

If you choose option three, you merely identify the primary care team to which you belong and the answering service will have the on-call primary care manager call you back to take care of your medical needs. It only takes about 90 seconds to get to option three.

The medical group duty hours are from 7 a.m.-4 p.m. The last scheduled appointment is usually at 3:45 p.m. and most patients are seen by 4:30 p.m. Although no additional patients are seen after these hours, the medical staff uses this time each day to catch up on notes, review test results, make phone calls to patients, fill prescriptions and prepare for the next duty day. Of course, we have surgeons on call after hours and on weekends and fully support deployment commitments levied on TEAM KIRTLAND. In fact, over the past year, the 377th Medical Group has deployed 62 personnel with 22 more deploying this summer.

We appreciate how hard you and your troops are working as well. Because of that, be assured that the medical group professionals are dedicated to providing timely, high-quality health care to all eligible beneficiaries.

Forum

We want your suggestions and comments concerning Kirtland AFB.

However, may we also suggest giving base agencies or the chain of command the chance to resolve your concern before calling Forum.

If you decide the Forum is the right answer, we don't print callers' names.

Customer service

Chapel, 846-5691

CE Help Desk, 846-8222

Commissary, 846-9586

Computer help, 846-5926

Energy wasting, 846-4633

Exchange Service, 266-9887

Family Services, 846-0741

Finance, 846-8045, 846-6639

Law Enforcement, 846-7926

Legal Services, 846-4217

Medical Clinic, 846-3406

Services Squadron, 846-1828

Write: 377 ABW/CC Forum

2000 Wyoming SE

Kirtland AFB, NM 87117